

# Paying for the Social Whirl in Canada

HOW would the people of Michigan, or any other of the United States, relish a proposal that they should build a Government House costing something over a million dollars for the edifice and grounds, maintain it at an annual cost of some \$30,000 for housekeeping, and see it utilized for no other purpose than establishing the governor and his family in luxury, and enabling them to extend consonant hospitality to occasional traveling "notables," as well as to "society" located conveniently to the state's capital town? Wouldn't Michigan folk smile derisively, hoot down the proposal, and remark, in effect, that the governor might live in a boarding house for all they cared! Could he get from them any fund for other entertainments than he might give at his own private expense? Let him live on his salary as governor and on any private means he might possess! The mere notion that the public should pay for an institution for giving free feeds, dances, concerts, and so on, to that sort of society which excludes fully ninety per cent of taxpaying citizens would be a little too much for American tolerance.

There is no more constitutional or other reason why Ontario, or any Canadian Province, or the Dominion of Canada, should maintain a Government House than why Michigan should. Yet every province except New Brunswick keeps up such house; while the Dominion maintains Rideau Hall for the Governor-General and Ottawa "society."

Our various governors all hold office as representing the Crown or Royalty. It seems to be conceived that the dignity of royalty is somehow kept up by supporting royalties at the public expenses, even as lunatics and criminals are supported, though much more pompously, extravagantly, and unnecessarily.

If the Labor party attains political power in England, may Canadians not entertain hope that a laboring man or mechanic may be duly appointed Governor-General of Canada; a man averse to pomp,

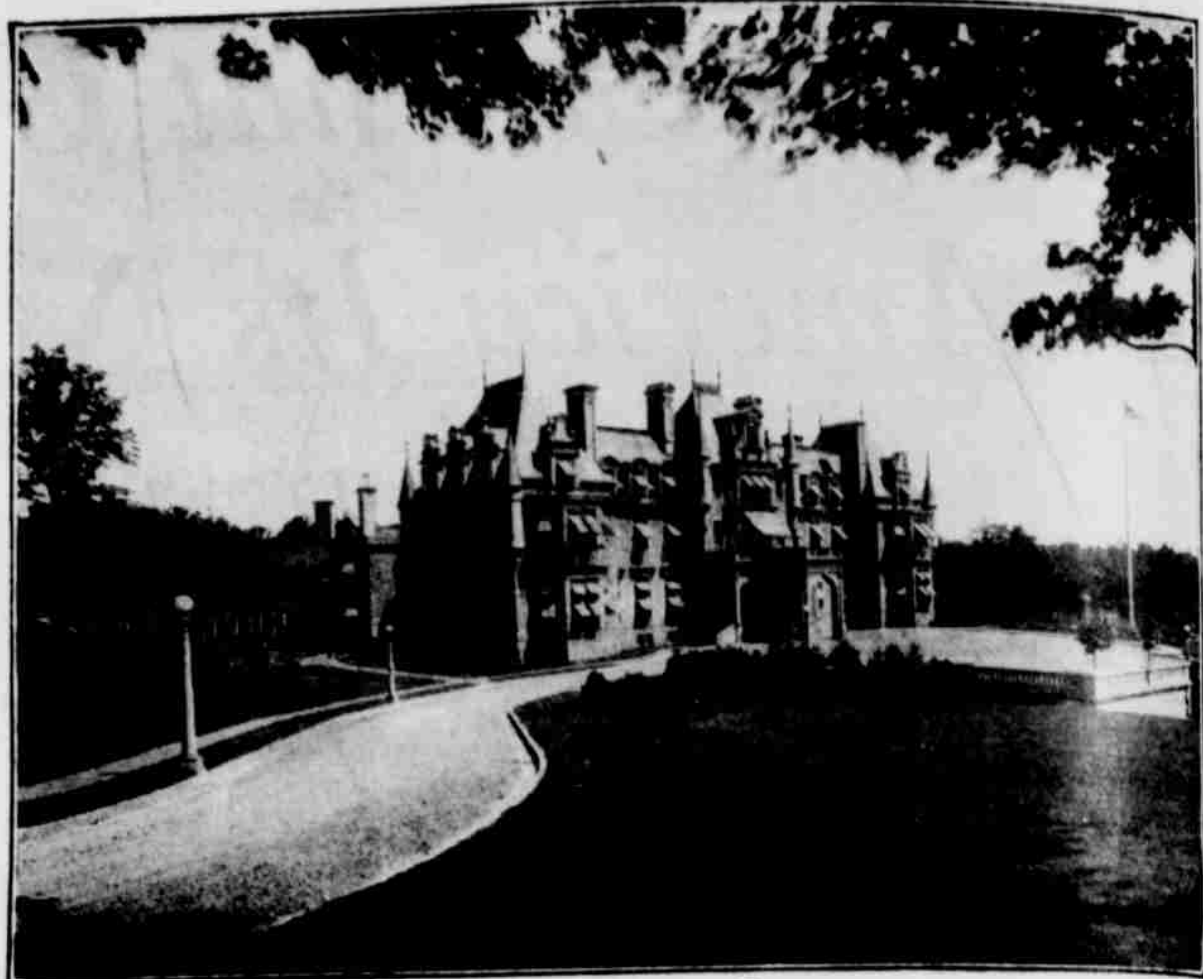
one consistently resolute to live in a cottage or a boarding house? How cheerfully would our "society" then agree that Rideau Hall and all the viceregal expenditures for its upkeep, should be abolished as quite outside constitutional requirement.

Behold the new Government House of Ontario, in Toronto! Also look on the pleasing countenance of Lieutenant-Governor Lionel H. Clarke, a very good business man, and a large grain-handler. Recently he wrote Premier Drury, in effect at least, that he would not have accepted the governorship except for his belief that the new palace would be kept up for him at provincial expense.

The Farmer party, now in power in Ontario, had meant to suppress the absurd thing and save the money that was worse than wasted on it. Premier Drury soon found out that the ground on which the new, great mansion stands had been bought by the late "Tory" government under engagement to devote it all to the palace or to private residential purposes. Hence Mr. Drury could not convert the whole thing to hospital uses, as he had designed.

Mr. Raney, the Attorney-General in Drury's cabinet, recently stated that the upkeep of the new Government House was costing \$100,000 a year, including interest on cost. It had required, in capital outlay, almost \$1,100,000 up to last February. Keeping the place in appropriate shape during 1919 cost nearly \$40,000, including \$10,000 for decorating it in honor of Prince Charming, of Wales.

Mr. Raney said: "On the one hand we are invited by the farmers and some others to economy. On the other hand we have a more or less ornamental institution that is costing us \$100,000 a year. On the one hand we are told that we must have an adequate place in which to entertain royalty, vice-royalty, and other distinguished people when they come to Toronto. On the other hand we are told that the institution is undemocratic, and that, as things go, no poor but honest man—no farmer, no laborer, no college professor, no premier could accept the office—that, in short, under existing conditions, the lieutenant-governorship is a job for a rich man only. Then it was pointed out that our national debt is now over two billions of dollars,



The Government House at Toronto.

six times what it was in 1914, with interest fifty per cent higher than it was then, and that our provincial debt is twice what it was in 1914."

Surely the mere facts should ordain abolition of Government House. How much more essentially dignified would Governor Clarke's course be if he insisted on the shutting up of the absurdity.

Such abolition was proposed twenty-five years ago by an Ontario member of Legislature who then represented the "Patrons of Husbandry," an association or party of farmers who, too, soon ceased from vigorous agitation for common-sense dealing in general. Possibly we may get the like from the Farmer cabinet of Mr. Drury, though both the old parties seem keen to embarrass him.

It would appear to the observing eye and reflective mind that it might be good policy for Mr. Drury to cause extensive circulation throughout Ontario of that number of Construction (a magazine conducted in the interest of architects, civil engineers, and contractors) which devoted no less than seventy large and handsome pages to illustrating the beauties, glories, decorations, gardens, grounds, conveniences, and so on, of the new gubernatorial palace at Toronto.

The world has had a terrible lesson as to what comes of the rivalries of the devotees of pomp and luxury. The World War came of long international competition of nations to display, and maintain themselves in means to display perennially, modernized Belshazzar's feasts. If "mene, mene, tekel, upharsin" be not now written on The Wall of Time by the mysterious power that flashed it on the wall in Babylon, then the meaning of today's scroll seems untranslatable.



LIONEL H. CLARKE  
Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario.

## Secession Movement Agitates Belgium

Brussels, Belgium, April—(By Mail).

BELGIUM, though strongly united during the war, is now confronted with agitation whose object is to dissolve national ties. It is known as the "activist" movement, "activist" sometimes being synonymously employed with Bolshevism. Some call it treason. Its leaders and participants are generally Flemish, whose leanings are toward things Teutonic rather than Latin, who seek a division of the Flemish and Walloon or French elements in Belgium in preference to a rapprochement and who are partial to the Dutch as against the Belgians. The courts are daily condemning "activists" for having aided and abetted Germany during the war.

The government thus far has not made known its stand on the question, evidently with the desire not to offend the loyal Flemish, and there are many, of course, who are loyal to the kingdom of Belgium, and who are outspoken in their condemnation of "activism." It has, however, just practically closed the Belgian-Dutch frontier to prevent Dutch agitators coming to Belgium to participate in a threatened pan-Dutch movement at a forthcoming meeting of students at Louvain. All applications for passports of Hollanders to enter Belgium are subject to rigid control by the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

A warning to the government of the danger of "activism" has just been given in a stirring patriotic address in the Chamber of Deputies by M. Hubin, Walloon Socialist deputy and speaker of the chamber, who said: "It is not with a lightness of heart that I am asking the government to become conscious of its rôle and to watch over a movement which to me appears to be of the gravest. The situation of Belgium is long from being reassuring. A malaise exists everywhere. The restoration of our country is thus rendered more difficult. There exists unfortunately in Belgium that which is tending to dissolve the Belgian nationality itself. The 'activist' movement if it should succeed would forever destroy Belgium and national unity which is the result of a secular evolution. The chiefs of state cannot be indifferent to the actions of those who would destroy the state and this is the purpose of my interpellation."

It had been expected that the Flemish "activist" campaign would end with the German occupation of Belgium. Nothing of the kind has happened, and it seems to give credit to the words of the German officer: "We are the losers, but we leave Belgium

strewn with seeds of discord which will grow and spread." It would be as unwise to take appearances for facts as to neglect evil at its beginning.

The Belgian people showed, during the occupation and after the liberation of their country, by their attitude and by their manifestations, by their loyalty (not counting all the soldiers given to the country), how much they disagree with those whose object has been to ruin the national unity. The Flemish "activists" are but a small minority in Belgium; thus their eagerness to stir up public opinion and to create disunion. In trying to succeed they do not spare their efforts, nor their funds, the source of which it might be interesting to know.

It is believed generally that these funds are sent to the "activists" by their friends in Holland. Knowing that their real aim would not be popular they try to make the people believe that the Flemish are wrong in their political and moral rights.

This state of things would not be very serious if the "activists" were isolated in the country or in the Parliament. They have succeeded in having five deputies elected out of 186 in the chamber. Certain political groups speculate on the advantages they could gain by allying themselves with the "activists," and do not hesitate to uphold a dissolving move, thus neglecting the interests of the country.

In this problem, which divides the people, public opinion demands a prompt and just solution.

The reserve of the government generally is blamed by the people and by numerous papers representing political opinion.

The interest of M. Hubin's challenge to the government brought a considerable audience at the chamber where many violent incidents took place, thus showing the maneuvers of those upholding the "activists."

The debate even brought in the relations with Holland and the whole question doubtless will again arise on a greater scale.

M. Hubin further defined the "activists": "It is an agitation upheld by strangers and working, consciously or not, for strangers; which is seeking to lessen the public power." M. Hubin took care to explain the propaganda carried on by the "activists" in the army and on the Belgian front. He showed how easily the simple and naive soldiers were led into misjudgment by their chaplains and stretcher bearers. He established that the principal directors of the movement were related with the famous "Flemish council"

of German origin, and how after the armistice the pan-Germanism was changed into pan-Dutch to continue its action.

M. Hubin disclosed the aim of the different political groups sustaining the "activists." It is nevertheless the Flemish, who for thirty-five years have had the majority, who now speak of the bondage of Flemish people.

"There are two parties in Belgium," said Mr. Hubin, "and not three; those who place the national interest above all, and those who consider only their own personal advantages." It was then that the "activists," nearly totaling the Catholic deputies and the Socialist deputies, with the Internationalists, grouping themselves around M. Camille Huysmans, the Socialist labor leader, tried to interrupt the orator, attacking him vigorously. Even some of the Catholic Walloons, invariably opposed to the Flemish, took part in the protest thus betraying the mandate of their country.

M. Hubin also said why it was necessary to make a distinction between those who recommended an alliance with France and those who urged an alliance with Holland. He declared, "Between immortal France, which has shed the blood of 1,500,000 of her children to save us and herself, and Holland, who has won millions through our sufferings and our misfortunes, my heart cannot hesitate."

These words brought a great ovation on the left of the chamber, the Liberal and Socialist deputies arising, acclaimed France. M. Delacroix, prime minister, wishing to attenuate the words against Holland, asked the chamber to protest. Only a few deputies of the right seconded the minister but the majority stood with the Walloon deputy, M. Hubin.

M. Hubin stated that he wanted the truth to be known, recalling the fact that Queen Wilhelmina, of Holland, had sent a telegram felicitating Governor-General von Bissing, when during the occupation of Belgium, the latter had suppressed the French University, at Ghent, Belgium, to establish a Flemish one.

M. Hubin asked the chamber to take a decisive attitude toward the "activists." The prime minister answered that it was unwise to mix exterior and interior politics, and that furthermore the government of Holland had always maintained a correct attitude. The discussion is of vital importance for public opinion. The national parties will have to decide and show all confidence to the government of what has been known during war as "sacred unity" and whose situation at present is so difficult.